

IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly cancel claim 15 and amend claims 1 and 10 as shown in the following listing of claims, which replaces all previous versions and listings of claims:

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1. (currently amended) An information recording/reproduction apparatus utilizing near-field light, comprising: a light source for generating light; a suspension arm; a flexure fixed to the suspension arm; a near-field optical head fixed to the flexure and having a minute aperture formed therein; a substantially rod-like optical waveguide having a core and a clad for conveying the light emitted by the light source through the core; a reflection surface comprised of a terminal end of the clad located beyond spaced apart from a terminal end of the core of the optical waveguide opposite the light source for irradiating light projected from the terminal end of the core to the near-field optical head; a ~~recording medium disposed proximate the near field optical head;~~ and a light reception portion for receiving scattered light caused by an interaction between the minute aperture and a the recording medium disposed proximate the near-field optical head; wherein the near-field optical head has a lens formed on a surface thereof different from a surface on which the minute aperture is formed for focusing light received from

the reflection surface onto the minute aperture; and wherein the terminal end of the core is located at an intermediate part of the optical waveguide so that the clad extends beyond the terminal end of the core and terminates at the reflection surface.

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2. (previously presented) An information recording/reproduction apparatus according to claim 1; wherein the reflection surface is a plane having an angle of about 45 degrees with respect to the terminal end of the core of the optical waveguide.

3. (previously presented) An information recording/reproduction apparatus according to claim 1; wherein the terminal end of the core is shaped to form a lens.

4. (previously presented) An information recording/reproduction apparatus according to claim 1; wherein the reflection surface is a plane formed to increase an expansion angle of a luminous flux projected from the terminal end of the core.

5. (previously presented) An information recording/reproduction apparatus according to claim 2; wherein the reflection surface is a plane formed to increase an expansion angle of a luminous flux projected from the terminal end of the core.

6. (previously presented) An information recording/reproduction apparatus according to claim 3; wherein the reflection surface is a plane formed to increase an expansion angle of a luminous flux projected from the terminal end of the core.

7. (previously presented) An information recording/reproduction apparatus according to claim 1; wherein the flexure supports the optical waveguide.

8. (previously presented) An information recording/reproduction apparatus according to claim 1; wherein the lens comprises a Fresnel lens.

9. (previously presented) An information recording/reproduction apparatus according to claim 1; wherein the optical waveguide is an optical fiber having a transparent layer formed thereon provided with the reflection surface.

10. (currently amended) A near-field optical head comprising: a support member; a minute structure formed on the support member for interacting with a recording medium via near-field light; and an optical waveguide formed on the support member for guiding light between a light source and the minute structure and having a core for conveying light, a clad surrounding the core, and a reflective surface comprised

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of an end face of the clad, the core having an end face facing the reflective surface and terminating at an intermediate portion of the optical waveguide so that it is being spaced apart from the reflective surface therefrom so that light traveling through the optical waveguide is projected from the end face of the core, diverged by the clad and irradiated onto the reflective surface and is reflected by the reflective surface toward the minute structure; wherein information is recorded to and/or read from the recording medium based on the scattering of near-field light between the recording medium and the minute structure while the near-field optical head is positioned over the surface of the recording medium.

11. (previously presented) A near-field optical head according to claim 10; wherein the minute structure comprises a minute aperture formed in the support member.

12. (previously presented) A near-field optical head according to claim 11; wherein the minute aperture has a size equal to or smaller than a wavelength of light.

13. (previously presented) A near-field optical head according to claim 10; wherein the reflective surface is a plane having an angle of about 45 degrees with respect to the core of the optical waveguide.

14. (previously presented) A near-field optical head according to claim 10; wherein the reflective surface is a plane formed to increase an expansion angle of a luminous flux projected from the end face of the core.

15. (canceled).

16. (previously presented) An information storage device having a recording head, a suspension arm for supporting the recording head relative to a recording medium, and a flexure linking the recording head to the suspension arm; wherein the recording head comprises the near-field optical head according to claim 10.